

Strengthening Families Act (SFA) Committee

February 15, 2022

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Zoom

And

Foster Care Review Office, Conference Room

1225 L Street, Suite 401

Lincoln, NE 68508

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-Chair, Misty Flowers, called the meeting of the Strengthening Families Act (SFA) Committee to order at 1:05 p.m., and asked Adam Anderson to call roll and attendees to introduce themselves.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (9):

Payne Ackerman	Pat Frost	Brandy Gustoff
Heather Colton	Stephanie Gardella	Sara Riffel
Misty Flowers	Ron Giesselmann	Tiffany Uher

Committee Members absent (7):

Deanna Brakhage	Vernon Davis	Deb Shuck
Ashley Brown	Jessica Hilderbrand	
Rhia Connley	Terri Knutson	

Ex-Officio Members present (2):

Bailey Perry
Jeremy Behrends

Ex-Officio Members absent (2):

Monika Gross
Deb VanDyke-Ries

A quorum was established.

Guests In Attendance (6):

Crystal Aldmeyer.....	Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
Adam Anderson.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Lindsay Meyer.....	Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation
Felicia Nelsen.....	Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parents Association
Laura Opfer.....	Nebraska Children’s Commission
Lauren Ward.....	Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

a. Notice of Publication

Recorder for the meeting, Adam Anderson, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meeting and Nebraska Children’s Commission website in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. The publication would be kept as a permanent attachment with the meeting minutes.

b. *Announcement of the placement of Open Meetings Act information*

A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection and was located at the sign in table and on the Nebraska Children's Commission website.

III. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Payne Ackerman and seconded by Sara Riffel to approve the agenda as presented.

There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (9):

Payne Ackerman
Heather Colton
Misty Flowers

Pat Frost
Stephanie Gardella
Ron Giesselmann

Brandy Gustoff
Sara Riffel
Tiffany Uher

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (7):

Deanna Brakhage
Ashley Brown
Rhia Connley

Vernon Davis
Jessica Hilderbrand
Terri Knutson

Deb Shuck

MOTION CARRIED

IV. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Brandy Gustoff to approve the October 4, 2021 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Payne Ackerman. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (9):

Payne Ackerman
Heather Colton
Misty Flowers

Pat Frost
Stephanie Gardella
Ron Giesselmann

Brandy Gustoff
Sara Riffel
Tiffany Uher

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (7):

Deanna Brakhage
Ashley Brown
Rhia Connley

Vernon Davis
Jessica Hilderbrand
Terri Knutson

Deb Shuck

MOTION CARRIED

V. Co-Chair Report

Co-Chair Flowers shared that Jessica Hilderbrand stepped down from the Co-Chair position and encouraged members to apply for the position by sending their interest to Adam Anderson. She noted that there was a meeting regarding the SWOT analysis that will be covered later in the meeting.

VI. Membership Update

Adam Anderson shared membership openings. Payne Ackerman shared and Flowers agreed that it would be nice to have someone who has recently experienced foster care. Sara Riffel added that Project Everlast has a website that shows openings, but it would be nice to have a marketing push with prepared messaging that would lay out time commitment, pay, duties, etc. Riffel shared that it would be good to have a process to push for youth voice. Ackerman noted that a partnership with youth organization would be beneficial. Flowers hoped to meet outside the meeting to have a discussion regarding engagement. Stephanie Gardella shared that the Normalcy Subcommittee is also looking to add the youth voice to the Subcommittee. Riffel added that there is a stipend available for youth participation.

VII. Legislative Update

Co-Chair Flowers shared that there is legislation regarding trafficking survivor privacy. Sara Riffel provided an update regarding legislation that Nebraska Children and Families Foundation is tracking. She also shared a link to their tracking in the chat: <https://neconnectedyouth.org/how-to-take-action/>.

VIII. Normalcy Subcommittee

Normalcy Co-Chair Felicia Nelsen noted that the subcommittee met in February and discussed a timeline for moving forward on reviewing Normalcy Reports. She noted additional work will revolve around providing a memo to agencies and looking for youth participation. Ackerman asked regarding the work of the Normalcy if it focuses on the specific items regarding normalcy plans or if there are other priorities. Nelsen provided information regarding the work of the Subcommittee.

IX. APPLA Subcommittee

APPLA Chair Crystal Aldmeyer shared that APPLA has provided recommendations regarding Transition Aged Youth Specialists to DHHS and they are excited to implement. She added that DHHS has found that there are changes being made to the Ansel Casey assessment. Aldmeyer noted that APPLA would be willing to assist with Ansel Casey needs. She also added that the TAY Advocates won't have a dedicated caseload, but they will work with the staff regarding older youth needs. Flowers added that the tribes are also in need of a position like this as well.

X. Trafficking Subcommittee

Co-Chair Flowers shared updates regarding the Trafficking Subcommittee. She introduced Lauren Ward from Nebraska Children and Families Foundation who provided an update regarding the work being done in the statewide action team to develop protocol and standards of care for trafficking survivors. The workgroup is exploring what Minnesota has done in this respect. She shared that she hopes to have a tiered protocol. Ward also added that there is a partnership with HTI Labs, that has a screening tool called Providing Avenues for Victim Empower (PAVE) that has been implemented with Central Plains. Payne Ackerman asked specific questions regarding trafficking awareness. Ward responded with information regarding some of the broader topics that the statewide action team is looking at. Members discussed the reasons for the Trafficking Subcommittee being replaced. Riffel noted that the Subcommittee would be asked to hold up the work of the statewide action plan. It was noted to have information shared regarding trafficking at the meetings, but the Subcommittee will remain inactive.

XI. Strategic Priorities Summary (SWOT)

Co-Chair Flowers shared information regarding the SWOT analysis and strategic planning summary. Flowers noted that she would like to see the Subcommittees take the SWOT analysis summary and ask questions she shared in the chat: What does this statute mean for our Committee here in Nebraska.? What do we want to

see in place for Nebraska families as a result of our actions? What do we want to accomplish this year? What specific actions can we take in the next 12 months to move us towards our vision?

Payne Ackerman shared thoughts regarding the strategic priorities for the Committee. Members discussed the vision of the Committee. Sara Riffel suggested mapping back the SWOT to the three priorities of the Committee. Adam Anderson will add the Strategic Priorities to the Google Drive for mapping input and at the next meeting members will discuss what specific vision the Committee has, as a whole. Ackerman suggested looking out into the future for goals.

XII. New Business

Co-Chair Flowers suggested that each Subcommittee review the SWOT Analysis and think about one to three goals.

Sara Riffel noted that there is a national TA to look at driver's licenses for foster youth. She noted that Crystal Aldmeyer or Deanna Brakhage may be able to share an update at the next meeting.

XIII. Public Comment

Co-Chair Flowers opened the floor to public comment. There was no public comment.

XIV. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. June 7, 2022
- b. August 2, 2022
- c. October 18, 2022

XV. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:57 p.m.